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Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2009–2010 Funding Requests

Sonoma—New Santa Rosa Criminal Courthouse

Imperial—New El Centro Family Courthouse

Lake—New Lakeport Courthouse

Monterey—New South Monterey County Courthouse

Riverside—New Indio Juvenile and Family Courthouse

Sacramento—New Sacramento Criminal Courthouse

Shasta—New Redding Courthouse

Sutter—New Yuba City Courthouse

In April 2008, the Judicial Council updated its Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan that includes 152 new-construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.3 billion (January 2008 dollars). The Initial funding request for these eight referenced projects was \$88.2 million for the 2009–2010 Fiscal Year, which would be funded by the Immediate and Critical Needs Account of the State Court Facilities Fund in proposed court revenue bond legislation Senate Bill 1407 (Perata). Their total project costs are estimated to be \$1.4 billion. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for trial courts across California.

New Santa Rosa Criminal Courthouse

A new Santa Rosa Criminal Courthouse is proposed for initial funding of \$14.7 million for FY 2009–2010. The new facility will house 15 courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this courthouse of approximately 173,500 gross square feet is \$237.3 million (escalated to construction mid-point in Spring 2013). This project is ranked in the Immediate Need Project Priority Group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan and is one of the highest priority capital-outlay projects for the judicial branch.

Lack of Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The proposed new courthouse will accomplish the following immediately-needed improvements to the superior court and enhance its ability to serve the public:

- Replace the unsafe and physically deficient court-occupied space in the Sonoma County Hall of Justice (Hall of Justice), in the attached Old Jail building, and in the attached current jail or Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF) at the county administrative complex, as well as the space in the offsite Family Court Services leased facility;

- Create a modern, secure courthouse—to benefit all Sonoma County residents—for centralized criminal, traffic, juvenile dependency, and probate proceedings, family court mediation, probate investigative, and drug court support services, and for the provision of basic services heretofore not provided to county residents due to space restrictions: appropriately-sized jury assembly and deliberation rooms, adequately-sized in-custody holding, attorney interview/witness waiting rooms, a children’s waiting room, and security (entrance) screening of all court users;
- Consolidate court operations from three unsafe, overcrowded, and physically deficient facilities in the City of Santa Rosa—the Hall of Justice (including self-help center space in the attached Old Jail building), the MADF, and the Family Court Services leased facility;
- Create operational efficiencies and on-going savings through the consolidation of current court services and through the elimination of a leased facility; and
- Provide site capacity for a future building addition on the surface parking area for two future new judgeships.



Inadequate Security Screening Stations Create Long Lines for Access to Second-Floor Courtrooms, Creating Inconvenience to Public

Local Government Collaboration on Project

Preliminarily, the County of Sonoma has shared some possible locations for siting the new courthouse within the county administrative complex in the City of Santa Rosa, which include locations north, northeast, and directly east of the existing Hall of Justice site. Discussion on these proposed sites with the county, as well as on any that may be identified through the assistance of the City of Santa Rosa, will be held at the time initial funding for the project is secured, in order to identify potential economic opportunities such as a land donation or a below-market cost for land acquisition.

Long-term Funding Needs

The California legislature is considering authorizing a revenue bond to pay for the state's most urgently needed court projects. This legislation proposes increasing criminal penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects.

More Information

A project feasibility report for the New Santa Rosa Criminal Courthouse in Sonoma County, dated July 1, 2008, was prepared by AOC staff. This report documents the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court-occupied space in the Hall of Justice, in the attached Old Jail building, and in the attached MADF at the county administrative complex, as well as the space in the offsite Family Court Services leased facility, explores options for how best to meet the needs of the court and of the public, and estimates the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from the following Web site:

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/pfr-sonoma.pdf

For further information, please email the AOC-Office of Court Construction and Management at OCCM@jud.ca.gov.